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The Federal Triangle

Pentagon Creating Post To Oversee Spare Parts

Spare parts have made it to the big time.

From a neglected corner of the Defense Department's budget, spare parts became a scandal, then a political issue. Now, finally, they have won a permanent place in the Pentagon bureaucracy.

The Pentagon soon will announce the creation of a new position: deputy assistant secretary of defense for spares program management. The person in that job, expected to be Maurice N. Shriber, will be in charge of spare parts procurement policy for the entire military.

Shriber, a career civil servant in the Pentagon's Department of Manpower, Installations and Logistics, could not be reached for comment yesterday. Other Pentagon officials said the new position is intended to demonstrate the department's commitment to reform in the spare parts area and to make one person responsible for implementing changes in the system.

Spare parts became an issue during the past two years after revelations that the Pentagon had paid more than \$400 for a hammer and more than \$1,000 for a rubber cap for a stool leg. An audit by the Defense Department inspector general found that the services may have been paying too much for more than half the parts, tools and other small items in their inventory.

Officials said one reason for the problem was that spare parts requirements—how many extra screws should be purchased with each F18 fighter, for instance—are set by logisticians, while purchasing is done by the military services and other agencies and overseen by the undersecretary of defense for research and engineering. The new deputy assistant secretary will have a role in both requirements and acquisition.

In another personnel development, Pentagon officials said that retired Gen. Richard G. Stilwell, deputy undersecretary for policy, will leave his post at the end of the year. Stilwell, who is in charge of tracking down information leaks in the Pentagon and other security

matters, would be the second ranking official to resign from the department since the general election, following Richard D. DeLauer, undersecretary of defense for research and engineering.